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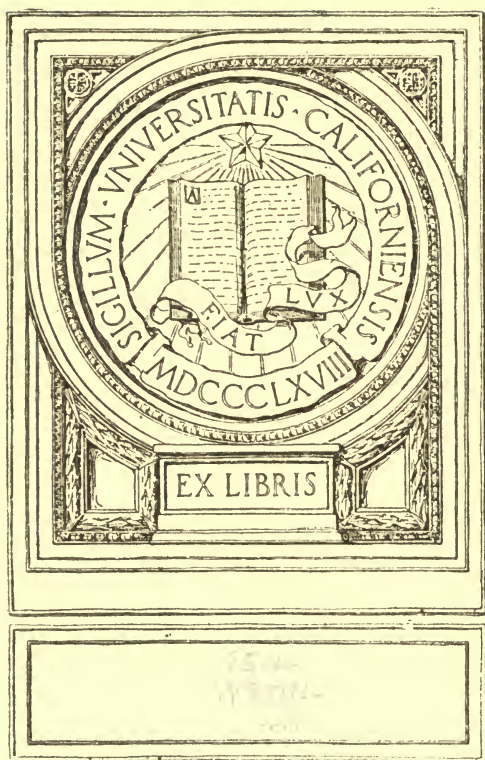
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A MASQUE OF LOVE

BY

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THE FIRST PART
OF THE
MASQUE OF LOVE

A MASQUE OF LOVE. THE FIRST PART.

SCENE I. EVE AT THE FOREST'S EDGE.



EVE. This kissing air is medicined with flowers and gently sweet, but soothes me not. Palm and brow and 'twixt my breasts are moist and I am heavy with oppression of I know not what. 'Twas yestereve I watched two wrens caress, and when she hopped into the aged beech, he, swollen to a feather ball, did mad himself with song from his sky-pointed bill. And then I watched the dark-browed Night, with quiet fingers, don her diadem. Mine eyes did question hers, and as the hours in slow procession dragged I sighed—and turned and sighed again, till one by one mine eyes put out the stars, my hungering unanswered still.

SOUTH WIND. Sister!

EVE. Who speaks?

SOUTH WIND. 'Tis I,—thy sister.

EVE. I see you not.

SOUTH WIND. I'm here.

EVE. Ha! Sprang you from the solid earth or wert thou coined from air? You come as comes the dew.

SOUTH WIND. Here, sister, feel my hand. I came to heal thy ache.

EVE. How soft! You smell most sweet.

SOUTH WIND. I slept among the honeysuckles yesternight. And thou art sick?

EVE. I'm sad. I had a buck with little horns like buds. He trotted after me on slim-propped legs,—his wet nose put into my hands, and answered me with sad brown eyes. But now three days, there

came from out the hazel bush a sleek young doe that stood and looked and sniffed. She bounded off and he did burst from me to follow her,—nor came he back.

SOUTH WIND. We'll catch a dappled fawn.

EVE. I did use at night to touch his velvet head. I think the night breeds with the yellow swamp and sweet fern beds, which makes the cool and moisty air smell sweetly of the earth.

SOUTH WIND. I think so too. That is my sister's bridal. Come! We'll get a fawn for thee.


EVE. I want it not. I think I'm sick.

SOUTH WIND. Aye, unto death and life. I know a poison good for thee. Come thou with me.

[Exeunt]

SCENE II. A MOUNTAIN SIDE.

Enter Hubert, a black bearskin on his arm. (Sings.)

HE Lark doth sing from top of tree,
So merrily, so merrily.
Come! Come! the sun is coming!
And I sing out with song and shout,
For woods are green and brooks are running.

The blackbird sings from slender reed,
So merrily, so merrily.
Come! Come! the sun is coming!
And so sing I unto the sky
For woods are green and brooks are running.

The speckled thrush sings in the bush,
So merrily, so merrily.
Come! Come! the sun is coming!

Three eggs do rest within the nest
And woods are green and brooks are running.

Down, Dropear. Down, good Swiftfoot. Down—
would eat me pets? Do think I sing to ye. So, so.
Now sing ye back, my beauties, pretties, glossy ones.
Down, down I say; I wonder would ye tear our
little doe if ye should meet her in the wild? I'll fear
to strike a doe again lest it be she. What whimsy
led her to be gone? (Sings)

Ah, the woods are green,
They're a pretty, pretty green,
But soon they shall be yellow,
Be not too late, ye little birds, which mate
But find your pretty fellow.
Your pretty, pretty, pretty mate,
Your pretty, pretty fellow.

Down, white-toothed ones. Must ye still leap upon
the she bear's empty hide? I like not mountain tops,
the air about them hath a loneliness. Good Dropear,
down! 'Twas hot blistering work above the clouds;
the sun untamed; the glistening, eternal snow: the
milky, melting streams a-snarling o'er the naked
rocks. The eagles far below; the woods like deep
piled velvet spread about the mountain's loins. And
there, we dragged her from her den,—this hairy
ravager of herds,—and here's her hide. I like not
those too fearful heights above the haunts of men.
The forest's calm I love—this great, green prayer
which spreads itself like upturned palms. Back!
Back! My Pretties. Yours is lower down to drink,
and give your bellies to the splashing stream. I'll
to the Forest's Eye. [Exit]

SCENE III. A FLOWER SPRINKLED
MEADOW.

South Wind and Eve.



SOUTH WIND. Here in this gilded mead
we find thy medicine.

EVE. How shall I know?

SOUTH WIND. How knows the panting dog what
water is? And how doth know the adder-smitten
boar what weed to chew to cure his hurt? Surely
thou shalt know. Did'st note that laurel catch thy
scarf and lay her pearly bells against thy thigh?
She sighed that it was whiter, bade me give you joy,
and asked that in your joy you do be mindful of her.
She was a woman once, her heart still swells with
nameless summer hunger like to thine.

EVE. Poor laurel!

SOUTH WIND. How like a mimic world this glade.
The monarch oaks, deep-rooted in submissive soil,
cast haughty shade about them, killing off whatever
in the circle of their empery would share their proud
monopoly of sun and rain; the courtier buttercups, in
gilded cloaks aflaut, just at the verge and bowing
in the sun—and woodbine sycophantic—climbing
to the sun upon the oaks' great strength, and lichen-
ed rocks which thrust their lowly snouts into this wav-
ing pageantry of privilege as if the humblest showed
their teeth and said, beware— Why look you so?

EVE. I hear the splashing of some fearsome beast.

SOUTH WIND. The beast most fearsome; dost
thou long to be devoured?

EVE. No! No!

SOUTH WIND. In time, in time!

EVE. Oh, no!

SOUTH WIND. Peep through this leafy screen and thou shalt see a sleeping pool, upon whose lips the vain, tall birches tiptoe stand and lean to see their silver mail.

EVE. Ah! Ah!

SOUTH WIND. Thou tremblest. What hast thou seen? Speak!

EVE. Oh, hush! Thou wilt affright it. 'Tis a god at play. A god a-splash within the pool that clings to him. His legs like ivory columns in the pool that dimples them. His back an ivory shield. His breast an ivory wall. His lips, his nose, his eyes, his curled brown hair with water drops a-glisten. All a god. I would that I might touch him ere I die.

SOUTH WIND. Thou shalt.

EVE. Nay.

SOUTH WIND. He'll kiss thy feet. Come thou with me.

EVE. Mock me not.

[Exeunt Eve and South Wind. Enter Hubert. He spreads a bear skin on the cushioned grass and sleeps, a hound on either side. Enter Eve and South Wind.]

EVE. How like the purest marble shines he on that ebon couch. He sleeps.

SOUTH WIND. Come thou, we'll kneel beside him.

EVE. Beautiful! How soft, yet firm, he seems. I'd see his eyes, but fear to see the blue-veined shutters lift.

SOUTH WIND. Fear not, my spell is on them too.

EVE. He's warm.

SOUTH WIND. As warm as thou.

EVE. Will he not wake?

SOUTH WIND. Not tho' it thunder. Not tho' thou should'st kill him.

EVE. O!

SOUTH WIND. Fear not.

EVE. I've touched him, felt his polished limbs, and pressed my cheek upon his breast, my heaviness all oozing out to him, my feet so light, I think yon pale blue bed of irises would bear me up.

SOUTH WIND. Come, stricken one, with me.

EVE. If stricken, 'tis with joy. Hark! to the oriole! Above his swinging pouch on yon great drooping elm he whistles to the falling sun. Once more, once more. Now come! To-night I'll be at peace. I need no medicine of fern or flag or swampy root: my fever's gone, there is no need.

SOUTH WIND. There is no further need, 'tis true, and yet much need. [Exeunt]

HUBERT (Awaking) I've slept a heavy sleep, as if I died and visions came most fair, but dimming now upon my memory. How sweet it smells of lilacs and of clover-fields afar. Yet here should only be the smell of moss and grass, moist earth, and summer leaves. The air hath witchery. Awake! ye dull and foolish sentinels! Dropear! Swiftfoot! Bad dogs. Some one has passed upon the grass and left sweet smell, perhaps a nymph. 'Tis mystery.

OAK HEART. Aye, mystery.

HUBERT. Hullo!

OAK HEART. 'Tis I, the friend whose arms have sheltered thee since first you lay upon the earth and plucked the grass, whose fruit you've chewed, whose gnarled roots have pillowed thee.

HUBERT. Friend, show thyself.

OAK HEART. 'Tis well! Canst thou not see a six foot oak, rough barked and grey with centuries?

HUBERT. Art thou the oak?

OAK HEART. Nine generations of thy kind have crept to rest beneath my roots: my roots have lifted them again to sun and sky. Both I and they are one; three hundred years I've stretched my arms unto the sun and battled with the wind. In silence of the plodding nights I've watched the cunning stars and heard the thousand voices of the dark which make the hush more still; deep-voiced frogs, the shrilling tree-toads and cicadas, far, sad whip-poor-will and shivering owl; the fox's bark and wild cat's wailing cry, the cricket's and wood mouse's squeak. Through all my summer leaves, the fire-flies bear their lanterns; winter strips me bare. The red hawk's nest doth fill with snow, and through the cold, clear winter night there's not a sound. I sleep. But in the waking summer time I stretch my arms to canopy thy bed, and at the last I take thee to my heart. For I am thine and thou art mine.

HUBERT. Then tell me, Oak, was any here now while I slept?

OAK HEART. The Southwind with a yearning girl.

HUBERT. What's that? I've killed an every wicked beast the forest holds, but never that.

OAK HEART. It is not use to kill them.

HUBERT. What is that delicate, sweet smell?

OAK HEART. They sleep in flowers.

HUBERT. How shall I see this girl?

OAK HEART. How comes the spring sap in my veins? The satin leaves upon my twigs? Inevitable

beyond resistance. She shall come to thee.

HUBERT. I thank thee firm and fixed friend. I'll stir no more abroad without my spear. Methinks thy leaves sound laughingly.

OAK HEART. And shall they weep when brooks are chuckling and the sun vaults o'er the ready earth and flowers do follow, follow where he treads? When swarming sparrows make the cedar trees alive? But whet thy spear; it is a cunning beast.

HUBERT. I warrant I shall be prepared. Now tremble all thy boughs with what seems laughter.

OAK HEART. See! between my high, wide-spreading knees this mossy couch. Was ever velvet bed so soft? 'Tis dry and thick and I will hold thee in a tender guard.

HUBERT. There opens Dropear and his mate, the buck's afoot and I must call them off or they will palter through the silver, summer night. (Sings)

Oh my cunning, cunning dogs,

Oh my tuneful mellow dogs.

What joy to your nose is the hot scent, Oh!

How you love the steamy trail,

And you'll follow, peak and dale,

Till the stag stands still with his heart spent, Oh!

HUBERT. Farewell— Good Oak!

OAK HEART. Farewell— But come to me with all the burden of thy love in summer time, and when pale winter frosts thy mane, makes dull thy taste, thine eyeballs dim and chills the feeble current of thy blood. Still come to me and at my root cast all thy burdens off and fall upon the earth, and sleep.

SCENE IV. A FOREST GLADE.

Enter Eve and South Wind.

EVE. How still it is. The woods, the hills, the plains, the lakes, are pensive for their burning lover who's departed down the world and only left a dying flush, as 'twere of love's remembrances. There is not a sound. The ever restless birch trees rest. Yon clouds are fixed against the saffron sky; the world has died. And hear how far, deep from the forest's heart, the hermit thrush shoots to the ear his slender shaft of song. That smallest voice, alone in all the bigness of this world.

SOUTH WIND. It more out-voices far the temple bells. Such nights I love. Whole seas of clover now yield up their sweets, and white-plumed locust trees, which in the sun-time hum with plundering bees, now breathe on cloistering night a fragrant love too gentle for the bold and boisterous day.

EVE. Your breath smells of the wild grape blooms. Come close to me. It is a holy hour. I feel a growing loneliness. Come close. Put your arms about me. Let me press my head against your breast.

SOUTH WIND. Here steals above the distant hills' dark velvet edge Orion's sparkling sword. Compose thyself to sleep.

EVE. I cannot sleep. The fever eats me. I shall watch with starving eyes, alone, alone.

SOUTH WIND. And thou art sick again?

EVE. Yea, sicker than before,—and now I know my hungering. It is to touch my ivory god, or just to hang above him as a humming bird above the trumpet flower. Or, but to hear him speak. To serve him like

his hounds,—to hide within the ferny brake and feel him touch me as he passed. There is a killing aching here, to which but he alone is cure. To eat him with my eyes; to pluck the grass he pressed. And would he hold me as that thou doest now, then every star would sing a chorus to the night and I would gladly close my eyes and sleep until the sun burned out. Oh me! To know I breathed the air he breathes!

SOUTH WIND. (Sings.)

Poppyseed! Poppyseed! Hither, hither run,
From where the hot, hot sun
Bakes hot the earth,
And thy drooped scarlet weed,
Come, come, my Poppyseed!
My drowsy sister, come!
On gauzy beetle wing with lulling hum.
Come to the one in need,
My chosen sister, come!

EVE. The spotted night hawk whirls on noiseless wing against the sky. [Enter Poppy]

SOUTH WIND. O! Sister mine, I'll pay this grateful debt some night when thou art parched.

POPPY. Who is in need?

SOUTH WIND. This one is she.

POPPY. (To Eve) Would'st thou forget?

EVE. O! How cam'st thou here? Who art thou? Whence do'st come?

SOUTH WIND. She is my sister of the night—my ebon-eyed.

EVE. How pale she is—how beautiful. I would the light were more. Your face is calm, but hath a touch of sadness. Purple shadows in your hair. I'd see

you in the sun.

POPPY. Behold my small embroiderers, the fire-fly host, which even now do fret the air with gold. They'll give thee light.

EVE. O, wondrous! Beautiful! These lines of fire in airy weaving on the velvet edge of night; and all about thy head a golden net. How beautiful thou art. How pale! How calm thy eyes.

POPPY. Would'st thou forget?

EVE. Nay! Not forget. I would not yield the dear and cruel pain. Long are the watches of the night when I must be alone, and like a hell-wolf is the hunger at my heart, and I am sick with this too biting fire, yet would I not my suffering ease by sponging all remembrance off. The pain he makes is dear and killing grief, but better than to cease to know that I have known.

POPPY. Here is a pale forget-me-not his foot has bruised today.

EVE. Oh, give it me; I'll keep it warm.

SOUTH WIND. So rest thee here,—thy head upon my knee.

EVE. Thou precious flower.

POPPY. Come hither, Sleep! Thou dumb and gentle visitor. Bathe in thy deep forgetful well this pricking memory, and wash these fevered eyelids with thy dew.

EVE. Thy fingers seem to strip all trouble from me.

POPPY. To eyes, to ears, to lips, come Sleep!

SOUTH WIND. She sleeps.

POPPY. I from my finger ends have poured the charm, nor shall she wake until the burnished pheasant cock croaks to the dawn and knocks the

dew from off the thistles. Fare thee well!

SOUTH WIND. Farewell! I'll leave her here; I must unto a lake I know, all powdered o'er with stars mixed with the golden lilies shut like buds; where great white bowled magnolias pour the balm in which I bathe. I'll there affright the prowling water rat to furtive splash and ere the sleepy sparrow chirps, I'll breathe on Hubert, then to her. Tomorrow is their day. Farewell.

POPPY. Is she, too, victim to the great, all-binding chain? The all-compelling goad?

SOUTH WIND. Her time has come,

POPPY. Farewell, may flowers be rich.

SOUTH WIND. Farewell, may sun be true.

[Exeunt]

SCENE V. A FOREST GLADE: SUNRISE.

Eve sleeping.



HICKORY. Wake, beautiful one!

CHESTNUT. Wake, beautiful one!

DOGWOOD. Wake, beautiful one!

ALL. She heeds not our sighing.

HICKORY. Wake, O beloved!

CHESTNUT. Wake, O beloved!

DOGWOOD. Wake, O beloved!

ALL. She hears not our whispering.

DOGWOOD. She is white like my blossom.

CHESTNUT. She is like my blossom, creamy and soft.

HICKORY. Like my leaves, she is fragrant.

ALL. She is a child of the earth, very beautiful.

HICKORY. Her foot is pink like the morning.

CHESTNUT. Her hair is like my ripened nuts seen in the sunlight.

DOGWOOD. Her breasts are ivory, they are cups white as my blossoms.

HICKORY. She is pink as the apple blossom.

CHESTNUT. Soft as the floss of the milk weed.

DOGWOOD. Her lips are red as my berries.

ALL. She is a daughter of the earth, very beautiful. She hears not our sighing. Oh, we who are chained to the earth, who stand fixed and lift our fingers to the sky, who pray to the sun; we whose spring blood mounts in our veins, who tremble and thrill when our lover comes; we who were men. Now our voices wake not. In the ears of men we are dumb. We are immovable, fixed; there is none who hearkens to our sighing. There is none knows our whispers. There is none—there is none.

SQUIRREL. Who sleepeth here?

HICKORY. Imp! Imp! Come away. She's not for thee.

SQUIRREL. Is she for thee, old Shellbark?

DOGWOOD. Imp! molest her not.

SQUIRREL. I have hands, though they be long and be meant to dig; I have ears, though they be pointed and with hairy tufts. I have feet that run, and I can laugh—I laugh at ye, ye prisoned ones—I run.

CHESTNUT. Chatterer, molest her not or thou shalt starve.

SQUIRREL. Who's she, this white and polished worm? I think I'll bite her cheek, 'tis juicier than a peach.

ALL. Molest her not, thou Imp.

SQUIRREL. Here's honey on her lips—they smell

of honey-comb—I'll sip it up.

ALL. Beware!

SQUIRREL. See how she turns and murmurs, kissing back where I did steal the sweets—I'd love to bite.

ALL. Beware, she is the daughter of the Earth and thou but forest imp. She's not for thee.

SQUIRREL. Nor thee, nor thee, nor thee. How many times, ye rooted things, ye tell me what I know. May I not peck as robins do at cherries ripe?

HICKORY. I'll cast a nut upon her. It is green, but it will touch my love and wake her eyes.

SQUIRREL. O brave! See, still she sleeps and on her fair white thigh a red spot from thy stroke.

HICKORY. 'Tis like a rose leaf on a bank of snow.

SQUIRREL. Cast thou, wise chestnut, one of thy green porcupines upon her flesh. 'Twill please her much. This is old Shellbark's way.

HICKORY. I'd love to crack thy crown.

SQUIRREL. I do not pelt my love with stones. Look now. I'll watch above her, swinging in thy limbs. I'll touch her with my hands and rub them on thy bark, so thou shalt thrill.

HICKORY. O, good Imp, do!

SQUIRREL. 'Tis good Imp now—I'll guard her jealously. Here comes young Stupid-wise.

OWLET. What's here, a glorious glow worm?

SQUIRREL. Glorious fool!

OWLET. I'll call them all—Hoo, Hoo!

SQUIRREL. Here comes my cock-a-dandy in the lead; my silent, modest joy. He thinks there's eating here. And come the forest tenantry from hawk to wren, from buck to beetle. See them gather 'round.

[Enter Forest tenantry. They gather round about Eve, bedding her in flowers. Enter South Wind]

SOUTH WIND. Who gave you leave to stare? Away! 'Tis dawn—Away, intrusive fools! (Kisses Eve.) [Exeunt Forest tenantry]

EVE. (Waking) You have been near him?

SOUTH WIND. Yes.

EVE. I would that I had been near you. Who has been here and left me bedded in these leaves and flowers? See all the fragrant litter round.

SOUTH WIND. It was the forest folk. They watched your sleep.

EVE. Come near, there's scent of him upon you.

SOUTH WIND. Take my hand and down these leafy lanes, green carpeted and sunshine flecked, we'll noiseless flit as shadows of a passing cloud—and we shall bathe where he did bathe.

EVE. Oh come!

SOUTH WIND. The woods are musical, and morning's choir in jangling melody makes sweetest discord. Now near, now far, and now a burst of rivalry which shakes the air. There is no cease. Wren, sparrow, cat-bird, cardinal and robin, lark, a thousand more, each sings his way, yet all a glad, sweet chorusing, and chorus-master mocker leads them all. The wood's green veil is tender still and pale; new in its summer birth. The slender traceries of stems and limbs a lovely maze, pink starflowers, delicate as breath, anemones and purple pansies made a carpet rich, May apples lift umbrellas, glossy green, against the morning's diamond shower.

EVE. There goes a forest herd. The dew still on their coats: how proud and daintily they step; how

haughty gaze; my playmate is not there.

SOUTH WIND. Now run with me. Thus hand in hand, as light as swallows, o'er this carpet pied whose jewels nod, and scarcely know they have been pressed. [Exeunt]

HICKORY. And she has gone. There is great emptiness about this place.

DOGWOOD. She's gone, and though I lean and bend, I cannot follow.

CHESTNUT. She has gone. Let us together sigh; each other soothing with our murmurous whispering; our leaves together clashing in sad grief with whisp'ring, rustling, hushing, sighing, soothing; so let us console our grief till she return.

HICKORY. I would have given her my sap to drink—it is most sweet.


CHESTNUT. I would have ripened nuts for her—they are most sweet.

DOGWOOD. I would have ripened for her my berries—bitter are they, but full of spice.

SQUIRREL. Hush, stupid and poor, rooted things. The day is hot and I would sleep. Aye! Sigh and whisper—rustle—ye shall not behold her. She has gone, but I am here, and I would sleep. Cast not on me thy tokens, grey Shellbark. Chestnut, drop not on me thy hedgehog children. Hark! I know your love and need no pricking. Oh! the very sky doth sing to me a lullaby. Hush me to sleep, ye whisperers.

SCENE VI. A COTTAGE AND GRAPE ARBOR.

Hubert with his hounds. (Sings)

HE blue, blue sky bends clear and fair,
The earth, it joys in giving.
There's smell of summer in the air
And I am glad of living.

Aye whine, whine when I sing, ye honest Courtiers,
Mayhap ye like this better. (Sings)

Woe, woe is me. By the black, the Cypress tree
I lie and moan and moan,
Nor close my sight,
O the weary, weary night,
I lie alone, alone.

Be still! Your chorus is more dismal than my song.
I like it not myself—a silly dirge. There is a scent
about me here I seem to know. 'Tis of the South.
A horn blast shall awake your ears, ye bell-mouthed
ones. (Blows horn—Hounds bay to it. Sings)

Then up, up, up, the blue is in the sky,
The thrushes wake the thicket,
And the sparrows wake the thorn.
There are dew pearls on the rose-leaf,
There is none so glad as I,
In the going of the shadow,
And the coming of the morn.

Then up, up, up, the blue is in the sky,
There is gold upon the hilltop,
And the veil of night is torn.

There is silver on the meadow,
And there's none so glad as I,
In the going of the shadow,
And the coming of the morn.

I'll race ye to the Forest's Eye. 'Tis fine to feel it's cool caress when I am hot. Back, Swiftfoot, naughty dog, fair start. Now come.

SCENE VII. THE POOL CALLED THE FOREST'S EYE.

Eve and South Wind.



EVE. I used to think my feet were light but thou hast brought me here as we were air. The clover blossoms white did only nod.

SOUTH WIND. It was my mood. The sighs and complaints and wooings of the trees do irk me so I stop my ears and run. Sometimes I'll lie and listen all the day. But now I am impatient with their frets: they have their fate—what boots it to complain? Do and wail not, the world rolls on.

EVE. Here is the place he lay.

SOUTH WIND. And there the place he stood.

EVE. I'll into it—Mayhap it hath some memory of my god. The very drops which clung to him may cling to me.

SOUTH WIND. Is this not sweet? So warm—yet cool.

EVE. So fresh—strength giving, splashed away it quick returns in eagerness to kiss and kiss again. It bears me up—it clings about. This is the very spot he stood. The shining depths which held him once

embrace me now. See what a shower of jewels in the sun my hands can toss.

SOUTH WIND. We'll quarrel! Come! There are dewdrops for thine eyes. There are more. Take these!

EVE. Stop—Stop—your splashy jewels take my breath. [Enter Hubert. South Wind vanishes]

OAK HEART. He comes with bow and spear. But little knows the cruel beast is near. Blue butterflies for chamber-maids, the couch is spread.

HUBERT. Come in, good dogs. Hark! Psht! There's splashing forward—wonderful, how white this is—and beautiful. Oh beautiful, most beautiful! The hungry pool does make of one a thousand. Twists each curve into a thousand semblances but none so fine. 'Tis rare to watch the countless mimicries the happy pool doth make but as the watcher tired of looking at the dimmer moon afloat upon the sleeping stream doth turn in gladness to the sky's bright pearl, so now this creamy soft and pink original rewards my truant sight, makes it unwilling to an instant stray and eager to return. I must have speech with her—Aye—touch her though I die! O one most beautiful! I pray thee, fear me not. I and my dogs are humble unto thee.

EVE. 'Tis he. Ah! Oh!

HUBERT. Yea, stare into my very heart: I only pray to touch thy hand, thou art so beautiful. Thou art a daughter of the gods. I could not harm thee if I would. I am a child of earth, but there is in me only melting tenderness for thee. See, I have cast my bow and spear aside. Charge, pretties! Charge! I'll come to thee and take thy hand and lead thee to this sun-gilt spot beneath this beech.

EVE. O, sister—where—she's gone! I am alone. Fair god. Where is the one who was with me but now before you spoke?

HUBERT. I saw none else.

EVE. I am alone. Fair god, thou'rt angry that I stole thy pool.

HUBERT. I am no god—child of the earth I am, and thou a nymph. Ah, me!

EVE. Nay, but a daughter of the earth.

HUBERT. Art thou, like me, a child of earth? I'm glad—O, I am very glad!

EVE. A frail, brief mushroom of the morning.

HUBERT. Still bright with dew. So dazzling white and pink. Child of the dawn. Give me thy hand. How soft. How warm. How quivering hot the sun. He pours his glorious flood as if he meant to slay us. Here I'll spread my mantle in this restless shade. These are my dogs—they kiss thy rosy feet, as I would too. They love thee well.

EVE. O, is the world so bright, or is it thou which shines my eyes? And is the world so still? Mine ears seem dulled—I only hear thy voice; my thoughts do choke my words. There is within me such great lightness as would lift me from the earth.

HUBERT. As floats the sky lark in morning seas of light upon the bubbles of his song—so lifts my heart.

EVE. If I were plucked from thee I'd wilt as quickly as the maiden fern cast in the sun. Break not this happy spell.

HUBERT. Cease not thy words. They stir in me a melody which is in tune with old Creation's morning hymn.

EVE. Say on!—say on!

HUBERT. Child of the earth, bright eyed, bright cheeked, white armed, I feel the arrows of thy eyes. I smell thy hair's faint spicery.

EVE. My love! I give myself to thee more willing than the lake receives the brook—more ready than the earth upturns her steamy April breast unto the sun. More eager than the long-coursed, panting stag drinks from the sweet and crystal rill. Thou art to me more beautiful than winter stars or full orbed moon within the violet east. More lovely than aught other thing this earth affords—or gemmy flowers or plummy trees or quick-eyed, painted birds or hind or doe. Thou art the one desired thing; a something draws me to thee as the stars are drawn adown the sky. I am by the great Archer shot upon the target of thy breast.

HUBERT. Thou art so fair, so white, so warm, so smooth, so soft, so beautiful!

EVE. My love! My love!

HUBERT. The lagging sun hath turned his pinnacle; a hush is coming on; the air is warm. The humble bee treads busily the thistle bloom. Come we unto the shelter of old Oak Heart.

EVE. Where thou art, there 'tis good for me to be.

OAK HEART. So is it now to be. As from the first forever so. O, great, hot sun, thou art a master breeder! See! They come.

END OF THE FIRST PART

THE SECOND PART
OF THE
MASQUE OF LOVE

A MASQUE OF LOVE. THE SECOND PART.

SCENE I. THE FOREST.

Martin and Philip.



MARTIN. God, what a night!

PHILIP. Speak louder, Martin. The rude wind howls away your words.

MARTIN. I say it is a fearful night.

I would we were well out from here.

The trees go down like drunken men.

PHILIP. 'Tis all pitch black. What's that? Again that shuddering groan.

MARTIN. A sound from Hell. Saints! What crash was that? It far outcracks the storm. There went a fir was centuries a-building. Let us shelter beneath these dripping canopies as do the hairy, houseless animals, and pray our home be never toppled on our heads.

PHILIP. It is a night for murder.

MARTIN. Psht! Say not that word.

PHILIP. When lulls the storm I hear a crying child.

MARTIN. Christ save us! Why did you speak of blood! By flames which split the sky, I saw the witches' oak.

PHILIP. Again that wailing cry. Oh, Christ, we're lost! It is a damned soul. O, Heaven, save! The fiend hath clutched me.

MARTIN. Stay! You're caught upon this bough.

PHILIP. Oh, cock-crow, sound, and come, bright comfortable dawn.

MARTIN. I would give much to see a window bright. To feel the blazing hearth.

PHILIP. There glides a light.

MARTIN. A pale, green, witches' light, a lure—
look not that way.

PHILIP. Christ keep us from the fury of this night
and evil spirits of this wood. I am wet through. The
sky has spilt its lees upon me. If I be spared, I'll
render what I've stole.

MARTIN. More loud. I cannot hear.

PHILIP. 'Twas naught.

MARTIN. What fools we were to try this way. Last
year in such a storm and in this very wood John Roach
was changed into a dog and howling ran into the night.

PHILIP. For love of God! Christ spare me and
I'll make amend for all my evil deeds. I'll pay the
widow Locksley for the calf I stole.

MARTIN. I think the gusty fury of the night doth
by degrees grow tired,

PHILIP. Thank God! And, see, the light is battling
with the dark. A man will dread the dark by nature
as he dreadeth death.

MARTIN. A long, dull dark!


PHILIP. I've heard it called a sleep.

MARTIN. But who would sleep if he were sure his
eyes would never lift again?

PHILIP. There's something in us fights against this
wakeless sleep. A rat will fight to live.

MARTIN. With old men 'tis not so. They are too tired.
They neither like not death, but it comes to sooth their
waywardness e'en in the moment while they feebly
do rebel like grumbling children. See the morning's
chariot is scattering the churlish clouds. The earth
wakes newly washed—as so it shall, refreshed by
a many deluge wrack, when we have slept a thousand
thousand years. Let us go on. [Exeunt]

SCENE II. MAGDALEN IN HER ROOM.

AGDALEN. Oh, will he never come! How all life ends when he departs and only sings its tune when I can see and hear and touch. How I do hang upon him as a pear sucks sweetness on the parent bough. All sweetness draw I from the riches of his love. When he is absent, what's the world? A stale and gloomy halting place until he come again. And when he comes—his presence, like a brighter sun, makes every vein to swell with love's sweet sap. Then is the earth new dressed—the skies bend lovelier, and stars come closer to my whispering. Then every flutter of my heart is like a bird in May. I would do anything he said except to share his love. Oh, I am jealous of the maid who makes his bed. Of her who hands him food. A glove, a flower, a leaf, or any paltry thing which he hath held is precious made. I give it kisses I should give to him. I smell it, tuck it twixt my breasts, and like some bedlam fool I love it past comparison. He's more than life to me. He is my soul, my priest, my prince, my breath, my God, my Christ. So wild a night and he abroad. My roof not his—my life not his. The days still hurrying into Time's abyss while I sit cheated of my only hope. I must be freed and I will free. This wicked compact marriage which in an hour doth bind the unknown sum of years despite what change may come. 'Tis wickedness! Prate not of God! 'Tis fetched from Hell. It is a compact holy as a sale of mares. If we do love, is naught; and if we hate, is naught; how it shall end, is naught. Th' inexorable folly still doth claim its sacrifice "till

death doth part." Aye, so! — aye, well! Then death shall part. I will summon subtle death to part this superstitious knot. This trick of priests. A lawyer's trick to damn unwedded love and give a parchment air to lust. What's marriage? If true love there be and no marriage, 'tis well; and if there be no marriage and no love, 'tis well; but if there be but marriage and no love, 'tis Hell. But then 'tis Hell respectable. It is an echo from the market place where woman had her body as her one poor price. And chastity! I like this virtue of the silken dame who, egged by brethren, sisters, mother too, doth coolly make her market for her merchandise, and bait the victim with suggestions of her wares. She strikes an altar bargain to some worn-out rake or dotard whose too withered age is foul to think on next her fresh virginity. But lawful marriage keeps her chaste—a most chaste prostitute. And that poor sister whose strong love doth make her weak—she is not chaste. Lawful! Lawful! I like that word "Lawful." Who made that law? And she a leaf in Nature's whirlwind caught, who seeks, who thinks no other thing but Nature's love—why she! she is not virtuous. Her love, too blind, has cut the very stick which drives her to the street. [Enter Edwin] EDWIN. Hush! Come not nigh me. I am wet. MAGDALEN. I come not nigh thee! Come not nigh to Heaven! Not to my salvation! Not to life or soul! At last I hold thee in my arms. My very god! EDWIN. I'm wet. I'll wet thee, dear one. There, I fear for thee.

MAGDALEN. It is but water. Were it blood, and blood of all my kin, I'd take it from thee deeming

only precious that it came from thee. I love thee, Sweet.

EDWIN. My darling, sweetest heart, wife of my soul. Tho' not my wife.

MAGDALEN. Who is it says I must be wife where I love not? What is the right to make me wife where is no love? The Law! The Law has got me in its iron clutch and those who love the Law will mock me. Well! Then let the Law beware. "Till Death us part." I'll summon Death, black-winged and terrible. Come, Death, and part the chains of infamy.

EDWIN. Hush. Thou dost rave.

MAGDALEN. I rave not. See, my hand is firm. Shall I just sit and let my one and only life run out, nor live with thee? Nor call thee mate? Not love thee with a high and open pride? Shall I descend into the grave and never know this only Heaven? No! I'll kill! What's he to me? A block to be removed. Why, what's this life? 'Tis breath. 'Tis taken daily for our food. He bars my road to Heaven. So I'll put him from my path. I'll be the slave of Law no more. And you shall wed me—take me—hold me—own me in the face of priests and all this foolish world. I know no Hell except to dwell apart from thee.

EDWIN. I am afraid, afraid of men and something we call God. Afraid of mine own soul in watches of the night and when I too shall come to die. Are we not happy in our love?

MAGDALEN. Twice no! Not I. I want you all my life. I want your name, your love, your child. There is a canker eating out my happiness. I'll face the Law and my own death-bed too as I had killed a dog.

EDWIN. Hark!

MAGDALEN. 'Twas but a shutter, swinging in the wind.

EDWIN. Is't the house which trembles or myself?

MAGDALEN. The house doth shake with fury of the storm.

EDWIN. It is an awful night to cast a soul adrift! Sweetheart, not yet.

MAGDALEN. O! You'll not love me if I do't. Your love will turn against that so great love which thought black murder but a little thing for thy love's sake?

EDWIN. Nay, nay. I am locked up in that hot passion of thy love. I'd love thee tho' I saw thee kill my father—aye, I'd love thee!

MAGDALEN. What is death! How gladly would I rather die than live this life of wasting. Death's but a fading back to earth. The end of strife, the endless peace. How often have I stood above him as he slept and longed to do this little thing would let him sleep much more—I do not wish his life, but I'll not be a flouted, jeered and scorned prostitute because I will not be a prostitute. The hangman slays not what poor wretch he hangs. It is the law, and so I slay not; it is the law. Their vaunted, boasted, holy law. That man-made thing which perfect is and cannot err. Go thou in here; Lay off thy sodden things and wrap thee in this cloak of mine and in my love.

[Edwin enters an inner chamber. Enter servant]

SERVANT. Madam, my master begs you to come to him.

[Exit Servant]

MAGDALEN. I'll come to him with leaden wings outstretched, deep broodings in my eyes; and in

my heart. What's Death but sleep—a long, long sleep—a dreamless sleep. And sleep is what tired men do most desire. [Exit Magdalen]

SCENE III. A BED ROOM.

Anthony in his bed. Enter Magdalen.



MAGDALEN. Did you desire e here?

ANTHONY. I do desire you. How wild a storm. It shakes the house.

MAGDALEN. It is a night in which to die.

ANTHONY. Most nights are fit to die in if we must, and none if we may choose. But you are far from death and I shall cheat him many a year. Talk not of dying. Come kiss me. I'm your lord.

MAGDALEN. I love you not. I was appraised—you paid the price and I, young fool, pushed by the will of her who gave me birth and should have been my guide, I was well sold. I love you not. I've told you so.

ANTHONY. By God! You shall. What is this whimsy, prating, school-girl appetite called love which is so delicate? Which will just feed upon the flower it will, and pass a better by. Eh! Eh! Which cannot be compelled. Aha! Cold time and I shall change thy tune. I have thee, and I'll have thy love.

MAGDALEN. Perhaps. How long a time is one swift petty year! I've brought your sleeping draught. I'll be your nurse—but not your love.

ANTHONY. I am no friend of sleep. That vacant time. That helpless, mimic death. The world, the bustle, strife, the warring competition to be first—'tis that I love. I grudge these hours to sleep.

MAGDALEN. Then take it not. I'll leave it here and when the lonely hours oppress thee, it is here.

ANTHONY. Stay. I will not be alone.

MAGDALEN. I'll stay. I think you bought that much.

ANTHONY. I think so too. Now give it me. A man must sleep. There was a time upon the hardest floor I needed none of drugs to give me sleep. Ah! When I wake, the world will seem new made.

[She gives him the poison to drink]

MAGDALEN. Aye, when you wake—(Aside) how old the earth will be. Good-night.

ANTHONY. 'Tis not good-night. I never knew a worse. I never heard the wind to bellow so and this old house is trembling in its bed.

MAGDALEN. 'Tis so. This night will be long.

ANTHONY. But if I sleep 'twill not be long. It will be as if the storm were hushed, all turbulence were o'er. For what I know not of doth not exist for me.

MAGDALEN. Most true, and so is heavy-lidded sleep a boon.

ANTHONY. Pish! If that I knew my eyes would close in death—to see no more the sun or moon or stars—my ears no more again to hear a sound; my tongue to rot and earth for me to end, I would not sleep though all the fiends of Hell did drag my eyelids down. It is a noisy night. When I do wake, I hope the world will smile.

[He falls into a stupor. Enter Edwin]

MAGDALEN. 'Tis done, he sleeps.

EDWIN. Will he not wake?

MAGDALEN. Not till the dead awake. Come, kiss me. Show thou lovest me still, and more.

EDWIN. I do—I do—I do!

[Kisses her and Anthony awakes]

ANTHONY. False! False! False! Murdered! Murdered! False! False! False! I dream—I sleep. I—

[He falls into a stupor]

MAGDALEN. He'll never look or speak again.

EDWIN. How his dull eye did freeze my soul—
He breathes and—might be saved.

MAGDALEN. He hath by now got far upon that
road on which no step points back. Come, Sweet-
heart, love me if you'd have me know your love is
not by this made cool. I had no hatred for this man,
save that he barred my path to thee; for thee I gave
him sleep. 'Twas all for thee.

EDWIN. God, 'tis a fearful night. How shakes the
house in every joint, and what a din of noises start
the ear.

MAGDALEN. Aye, 'tis a solemn night, for I have
blotted out that lamp was lit so many countless centu-
ries ago. I've quenched the flame which so precious
is, the busy little ant will fight to keep it quick. I've
broke the crystal globe. It lies now all in useless
bits. I've been a thief and stole a priceless gem
which I can never give again. I've thrust rude gravel
twixt the subtle wheels so delicate we cannot guess at
their machinery. I've robbed that dull and careless
body there of wit and sight and sense and taste and
talk and motion; all! Made blank and unconsidered
day and night; the robin's song and springtime's
green and winter white; dulled evermore that ear to
music, and to love or revelry. That tongue to wine.
I've ta'en the vital spark and left a slow dissolving
clod. And all for love. O, thou in me shalt light the

spark of life I have put out; and call me wife. I'll bear thee children. I am all mad for love.

EDWIN. This room and that upon the bed is terrible to me. Let us go hence.

MAGDALEN. The clouds are blown—the morning comes. Oh, what a heartener is the sun.

EDWIN. What's that! [A knocking is heard]

MAGDALEN. You must not stay—'twould peril thee. Good-night, good morning and good-by—till here you come to safely lie.

[Exit Edwin hastily and lets fall a handkerchief. Enter Benjamin]

MAGDALEN. Your master, Benjamin, is dead. Put all in order. Mend the fire. A fire gone out cannot be lit again. [Exit Magdalen]

BENJAMIN. Here is a handkerchief! I know it well. 'Tis lettered, too, and well—and I could guess 'tis by my mistress' hands. It is Edwin Graves'. How fine it is. How senseless dumb. Yet every thread might cry aloud, Murder!

[Puts it in his pocket and goes out]

SCENE IV. THE HALL OF MAGDALEN'S HOUSE.

Enter Martin and Philip.



MARTIN. Now is the time to reckon up thy ill and cheating deeds thou swore'st to make amend.

PHILIP. That was last night. The sun is shining now and shows me what a fool I was.

MARTIN. I do remember me the calf you stole from Widow Locksley.

PHILIP. Hell take your memory! Hsh! Here she comes.

[Enter Magdalen]

MAGDALEN. Ye were out in all the storm. It was a wild night.

MARTIN. It was indeed.

MAGDALEN. Aye! indeed.

[Enter Samuel, with servants and others]

SAMUEL. The night was wild and wild its work. Mistress, have you heard the news?

MAGDALEN. What news?

SAMUEL. The ancient oak in the stony field is down and lifted with its roots a half the field and picked between the fingers of the roots a skull with rusty, dainty, jeweled dagger through the eye. Here is a mystery.

SERVANT. I now am old and in my boyhood's time I used to sit beside the fire on howling winter nights and hear my grandsire tell of this same haunted field, wherein on fearful nights a spirit walked crying, "False! False! False!" A woman followed after, wringing ghostly hands.

MAGDALEN. Be still with foolish tales. I forbid you speak of this to fright the ignorant.

SAMUEL. There's news that's not of ghosts.

MAGDALEN. Well?

SAMUEL. At William Miller's mill, there at the headgate in the pond, among all sticks brought by the flood, this morning showed the death-white face of Farmer Hodges' little Bess, just turned eighteen. She and her unborn babe there 'mid the wreck as if it were Heaven's gate which patiently she knocked at.

MAGDALEN. Poor child! Poor child! You, Samuel, shall carry her unto her home and go you to the

priest and say I'll bear the cost of her most decent burial.

SAMUEL. Nay, not in holy ground. She is by church accursed.

MAGDALEN. Curse on the Church which curses the dumb dead or frowns upon the sinful, saddened heart. Then I will take her from the church and bury her on Acorn Hill among the first of violets. There let her outcast body melt to flowers and decorate the aisles of Nature's silent, sweet cathedral.

SAMUEL. The trysting elm is fall'n across the road and everywhere lie trees as if they had been stubble trampled down, and in a furrow of the Three Oak field a new-born babe, dead as a rat.

[Enter Michael]

MICHAEL. There's fearful news in th' village.

MAGDALEN. Say on. This seems a judgment day.

MICHAEL. Murder, love and murder. John De-brow returned unto his home to find his home betrayed. He cut their throats, as there they lay, and then his own. The place baptized in blood, and sprawling in a pool of mingled blood his orphaned babe.


MAGDALEN. My God! My God! What is this fiend called Love, which thou hast put to rule the world? What hellish devil is black Jealousy! That blackest shadow of white love. That warted, all distorted, monstrous thing which sits upon the ear of Love and whispers, "Madness!" Go your ways. This is the house of Death. My husband is dead. Go, all.

[Exeunt all but Magdalen]

MAGDALEN. There is a poison in the flower of Sin. It's fruit no sooner tasted than it cloyes. No quicker

had than sets a ferment in which turns the sweet to sour. I fear his love will faint at my red hand. I fear that I shall lose his love for that which I did do to keep his love. Come that—come death. I'd rather sleep than bear about a daily aching heart. I'd rather sleep than daily starve. I'd rather hug at once the long and dreamless sleep than daily die. But he shall love. Within my heart such lakes of deep affection are as man has never known. He shall not wed me. I will leave him free. It is the iron tie which is the curse of love. The law it is, not love, which murders, shames, turns joy to hell. Yea, I'll build our love on friendship's solid rock. I'll be that pool about whose edge he likes to linger, plucking flowers or lying down to dream, or drinking strength, or plunging in—come out new-made and clean.

SCENE V. MAGDALEN'S CHAMBER.

AGDALEN. I have done that to own his love which women shrink to do; and lost his love because of that I did. There is a creeping mildew growing on his once so forward eagerness. Oh, God! Oh, God! I hear a whisper from the groaning vaults of Hell, where I must lie. [Enter Edwin] My love, my lover, and my life! All blessings on you. Thou art the sun which drinks these writhing vapors of the mind and lets the sky show through. All horrors flee before thee as do children's fears in morning light.

EDWIN. You give your love too wastefully. You have no other thought. This is not good.

MAGDALEN. Nay, is it not? Can ever be too much

of good? Doth good afflict? If love be truly good, methinks the more 'tis piled with eager hands, the richer is the one who takes.

EDWIN. Love is a sweet, and most endures if Lent is sometimes kept.

MAGDALEN. Speak not of Lenten love to me. My hungry soul would starve into a ghost too pitiful, and die. Starve not my thirsty soul with meagre Lent, dear heart. Stretch not my longing on a purgatory rack because of some pale theory of love. The utter height of truest love doth scorn to think Love is not reasonable. It is a madness preciouser than health. A phrensy which obscures the sodden earth, and sets the winged feet to trip upon the sunrise battlements. Thou art my love, my life, my everything. See how the fruitful earth expands her bosom to the sun, and more and more as pour the fiery rays, so more and more the verdure comes and leafage beautifies our summer world. So I do ope my bosom to thy sun of love. I'll drink the blaze, put forth the buds and tendrils of my joy, and ever long for more. To those who live in body and in friendship of the mind, there's no such thing as surfeiting on love.

EDWIN. Such love would burn its fruits as weeds upon a rock in drought. You make too much of love.

MAGDALEN. Aye! So I do. It is my life.

EDWIN. When shall I marry you?

MAGDALEN. Never. What's marriage unto me? You know I scorn the marrying rites of priests, and laws which make a mockery. True marriage needs but two. That marriage we have had and that, dear Christ, I've lost! A chilling change stands bodily before my eyes. 'Tis palpable. I fold my battered

wings and close my eyes. You talk of marriage from a dutiful and cooling heart. Such marriage is to me but Hell and whoredom, though all the stale machinery of man with solemn clank should forge the chain.

EDWIN. Nay, Magdalen.

MAGDALEN. Nay, Edwin, let not pity prompt thee unto lies. I'd die to-night with smiling lips if I might have that love for one short hour which once I had, and for I love thee so, I know thou lovest me not. I know thy love hath fled on frightened wings because of my bad deed.

EDWIN. I love thee, Magdalen. I do—I do.

MAGDALEN. Oh, God, 'tis sweet to hear the lie we long for. Kiss me, Sweet, and kiss me close and oft while still I hear those words. Oh, Sweetheart, doest thou think it can be so? I thought that I might teach thee how to love me o'er again. I'd lie so dog-like faithful at thy feet. I'd work so hard to win thy love. Thou wouldst not need to move thy lips; I'd guess thy thoughts. Doest think thou canst forget I am a murderer?

EDWIN. For God's sake, hush—use not that word.

MAGDALEN. Hast not thou used it in thy heart?

EDWIN. Why probe me with these useless questionings?

MAGDALEN. Truth is never useless, howe'er it hurts. Let me ask thee but one question and answer on thy soul as at the judgment bar. Thy love is less I know. I ask not that, alas! A woman need not ask if love be sick. Canst thou beneath the twinkling vault of night, when silence is, still draw me close and in the throbbing hush forget this deed I did for love of thee? I charge thee answer on thy soul.

EDWIN. I charge thee ask me not such questionings. Thou art half mad. I say I'll marry thee.

MAGDALEN. Thou hast me answered. And I did need it not. Oh, how we hope and hope, and longing, hope against the dread which certainly we know. I knew, I knew, I knew most sure. And yet I hoped as do the vile condemned. Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, God! Now let me die. I shall go mad. God send me gentle death.

EDWIN. Hush! Hush! [Enter Sheriff]

SHERIFF. (To Edwin) I do arrest thee for the crime of murder done upon the body of one Anthony McLane. Here is the writ.

EDWIN. What's this! Of murder, say you? I!

SHERIFF. Here is the writ. This is your name?

EDWIN. It is my name. For murder of your husband. I'll go with thee and prove my innocence.

MAGDALEN. Is there no writ for me?

SHERIFF. No. None.

MAGDALEN. Then justice limps most cruelly. I'll go unbid. As outcasts from the flock still follow tho' undrove.

EDWIN. Nay. If thou lovest me stay! 'Tis wise for thee—for me. There is no haste. I'll keep thee well advised. I charge thee for the moment stay. Be not alarmed. This matter will soon pass. I charge thee on thy love, do as I bid.

MAGDALEN. I'll do what'er thou bid'st me do, and yet I suffer too, too much.

EDWIN. Farewell, and truly, fare-thee-well.

[Exeunt all but Magdalen]

MAGDALEN. Just God, here is the end. There yawns my grave. Here at my very feet. It looks so

black. One step and I am in. My flesh from dark oblivion shrinks, but, Oh! I think my weary soul will be a little glad to sleep, such long, long sleep. Time shall have ceased and noise of tears. The sun for me is dead. I'll see and hear no more. Though he should shout into mine ear, "Come back! I love thee! Love thee as before! I love thee as no child of loving Eve was ever loved"—why, even then, I shall not hear. I cannot come. My ears are stopped; my eyes are shut; my mouth is stuffed. Dead! Dead! Gone back unto the cool, caressing grass, the kind, slow sisterhood of weeds. Ah! Ah! Oh, God!

SCENE VI. THE HALL OF MAGDALEN'S HOUSE.

Servants and Martin.



FIRST SERVANT. You, Martin, are to wait my mistress here. What news from court?

MARTIN. Bad news for some and good for others, as news ever is.

SECOND SERVANT. How doth the trial go?

MARTIN. Why, not as some would wish and to the gayety of some.

FIRST SERVANT. Friend Martin's like a fortune teller, who looks wise and talks in doubles so he cannot fail.

SECOND SERVANT. Or like a politician, saying much and meaning naught. But truly, Martin, tell us of the news.

MARTIN. I will, and gladly, to your mistress.

FIRST SERVANT. 'Till then we'll wait for thee below.

[Exit Servants. Enter Magdalen]

MAGDALEN. What news, good Martin? Oh, what news? I am as one enjailed and fed on husks. I starve into a fever. Tell me, what's the news?

MARTIN. Dear lady, day by day, like some old cat, I've passed from there to here and here to there. Still bearing provender to thee. And so I come. He bids thee be of heart and hope—and as you love his life keep to yourself as you have done at his command.

MAGDALEN. I love his life above my soul. I am his wife, if ever God, not man, made wives. Oh, Martin, I, his wife, I should be there, not here. Is this a way to do? Why does he make me suffer exile from all I ought to be and all I long to do? Nay, tell me, I conjure you, by your soul, the truth. The very truth. Make my wet eyes to see the very scenes of truth and not the hideous things which for too long have danced on emptiness before my gaze. I'll love thee for't. Speak. Speak, man, speak! By your mother's soul, the truth.

MARTIN. Aye, by the living God, I will! 'Tis thus. It is my opinion he stands on the very gallows' steps. Why, I myself did testify that on the morrow of the storm I met him at your door. I must do so; 'twas true and that too crafty villain Philip swore to this and more—which I saw not nor think he saw. It hath been proved your husband died of poison, not disease, and many swear that Mister Graves was constantly your visitor.

MAGDALEN. Enough. Get harness on the swiftest horses of my stalls, Red Rob and Cruelty. Thou'lt take me to the court.

MARTIN. It is forbidden by his strict command.

MAGDALEN. And I would follow his command

as slavish as a dog—but there's a time 'tis pious to rebel and good to disobey. I'll sit amid the fearful hatchings of my brain no more. What! Dumb and tied, must I see him, the one I love, swept on to death? Go! Haste!

[Exit Martin. Enter William Robbins]

WILLIAM ROBBINS. Good morning, Madam. Beauty still doth find your cheek her resting place.

MAGDALEN. Good morning, sir. Talk not of beauty to the cheek that's ready for the worm.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. Good Lord!

MAGDALEN. Nay, say it not as one who's pricked his thumb, but with resigned and streaming eyes say most pathological, Good Lord! Cry from the heaving depths of a most pitiful and bleeding heart, Good Lord! How strange is use and childish fibre in the mind. I do believe there is no Lord, and yet I cry from off this sinking raft I call my life—Good Lord! Help me, Good Lord!

WILLIAM ROBBINS. Do you, a woman, think there is no God, and shut yourself from pious comfortings?

MAGDALEN. And who shall say there is a God? A wise and loving master of the whole machine. No, no, I pray you mark the tears of misery, the narrow bed and starving crust of Virtue; Vice in gilded coach with lackeyed ease. The noble raped by death; the most vile spared. The little children fed to giant Want. The wicked strong triumphant, and the glorious weak close penned in camps of death. See how, with blind indifference, the fairest flower of all is broke and weeds are left to grow. Is there a God you think who having power to stop

the agonized tear and smooth the jars of this too rough and topsy-turvey world would sleep indifferent and deaf? There's not a wreck but answers, No! WILLIAM ROBBINS. Believe me, this is dreadful to the true religious heart. 'Twill surely shock the world.

MAGDALEN. Why, if 'tis true, the world must be resigned, and if not true, it matters not.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I think you are not well, and yet you look not ill.

MAGDALEN. So much the worse, for I am ill.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I do regret this much. I came to speak of Edwin Graves and you. It grieves my soul to see him thus, for there's no help. 'Tis proved that he must die. Your life stands too in peril, but may yet be saved.

MAGDALEN. My life in peril? I thank thee, God!

WILLIAM ROBBINS. You live retired; you hear it not. But you are in peril. Yet if, as I should say, you would—and I see not why you would not—if you would come beneath my sure protection and my love, they would not dare to touch what was mine own. I am rich and am a godly man.

MAGDALEN. Why, he is innocent. The law doth surely not desire the innocent to die.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. Nay, he is doomed. For him I can do naught, nor will. But you—

MAGDALEN. What was it you said?

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I said—I say—

MAGDALEN. Nay, what you said or say is naught to me. I am not well. I beg you go.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I say if that you will not link your fate with mine you'll die.

MAGDALEN. Aye, so I think. I think so too. Death is a master hard to cheat.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I mean upon the scaffold shamefully you'll die.

MAGDALEN. I think the dead do little heed what way they died.

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I come to save you. Sure the young and beautiful like not to die.

MAGDALEN. Then learn from me, about to die, that Love's not purchaseable. That in this busy world are women who will die for love; and love being denied, all life is gone; the green earth is dried and shriveled; no laughter in the brooks; no song in birds; no comfort in the whisperings of fringed trees. And if they cannot have the very love they crave, they creep away with broken wing to die. I say to you, prepare for death! You have much need. I see a death glow on your cheek, a death dank in your hair. Go you, prepare to die. You are but flesh, and flesh is soil for death. Death is your bride. You need not seek her. She is on your track and pressing on. Prepare I say—

WILLIAM ROBBINS. I think she's going mad.

[Enter Martin]

MARTIN. All is prepared.

MAGDALEN. And so we go—to my grave I, and you to yours. Come, Martin, haste. I never was so feverish for cool, fair death.

[Exit Magdalen and Martin]

WILLIAM ROBBINS. She's mad! She's mad!

SCENE VII. THE COURT ROOM.

Judge, Jury, Clerk, Bailiffs, Prosecuting Attorney and others.



JUDGE. Bring in the prisoner. [Enter Sheriff with Edwin]

ATTORNEY. One word. (To Edwin) Again I say, you stand in peril of your life. A woman's presence oft is eloquent and pity puts to rout the strongest proof. I pray you let me bid her come. 'Tis most imperative.

EDWIN. Again I say I will not have her here. Let us go on.

ATTORNEY. I'm ready, please the Court.

JUDGE. Now call the jury roll.

[Roll is called. All answer]

CLERK. The jury is complete.

JUDGE. The trial may proceed.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. Let Benjamin Badeau resume the stand. [Benjamin stands forth] Conclude your evidence.

BENJAMIN. Must I go on?

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. You must.

BENJAMIN. The night my master died—it was a wild and dismal night—I crept with silent steps and awe-held breath into the chamber of the dead.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. For what?

BENJAMIN. To mend the fire.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. Go on.

BENJAMIN. There was no sound but slow death ticking of a clock and on his bed my master slept—or what had been my master lay as if asleep—and

here, beside his bed, upon the floor—he could have touched it—lay this handkerchief.

[Enter Magdalen]

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. This handkerchief?

BENJAMIN. This handkerchief.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. Whose is this handkerchief?

BENJAMIN. It is the prisoner's.

MAGDALEN. I charge you stop! Why vex the world with all this tedious circumstance when Truth stands ready at your hand? I killed my husband—I—

EDWIN. For God's sake, Magdalen!

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. May it please the Court, we do object.

MAGDALEN. Object! Object to truth!

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. There will be a proper time for this; not now.

MAGDALEN. Forgive my ignorance. I did suppose all rules were meant to point the honest way and every rule would bend to save a life. I say 'twas I alone who killed my husband.

JUDGE. The law is tender of a life and will not let you, unadvised, proclaim your guilt and seek a shameful death.

MAGDALEN. Is law so tender of a life it will not let me tell the truth to save one innocent, but puts its shutters up and bars its doors? I say again, 'twas I alone who killed my husband. There's no power of God, or man, or long delay, or prison fare, or death will make me alter in this truth.

JUDGE. I do advise you all you say may on your trial be retold against you.

MAGDALEN. I do so understand. Why not? 'Tis true.

JUDGE. Let her be sworn.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. But we object. The prosecution has not closed.

JUDGE. Are you the advocate for truth or death? I say I'll hear her now. Let her be sworn.

CLERK. You, Magdalen McLane, do swear to tell the truth and all the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MAGDALEN. I do—so help me God. So help me God! Oh, I have need of help. My story is soon told. It is not new. I loved not when I wed. Therein was I to blame—but I was very young and after wedding I recoiled into some arctic, love-deserted place and pushed my husband out. And then I loved another man. Oh, I was bred religiously. I knelt beside my narrow bed and prayed for help. I clenched my fist against the far, dumb sky. I wept upon my arms and often knelt the long night through with sobbing moans beseeching God to tear this devil, love, from out my heart. It fed upon my tears. I was possessed of love. I have not seen another one who loved as I. It drew my very soul as is the battling and rebellious sea drawn into tides, or as the earth is drawn upon her wind-swept path. I could not more resist, and blind with happiness, and soothed, I said, "God's will be done." So lost myself in him who is the sun and center of my universe. I knew no shame. I felt a greater than a priest had blessed; a law, not made by man, had ratified. I told my husband all and begged release. He held me tighter in his lawful bond. His lawful

bond! A madness seized my mind. "If I were free—if I were free—if only I were free. The home, the happiness, the child, the bliss as perfect as a half-wrecked vessel finds when out of all the wild tumultuous roar she rounds some sheltering cape and rides mid little, playful waves." Then came this sickness and I said unto myself, "He holds me by the law until Death do part. Then Death shall part." The poison, ready to my hand, I gave it him. But all for love. Indeed I did, I did it all for love. I would have been so glad to have him live. I hate not any one, but I did love too much. My love, my Edwin, was with me that night. It was a wild and terrible night, and when the thing was done by me alone I called him in and he stood fixed—displeased. My heart, like some spring flower which feels the frost, grew chill, for I did know that in that instant he had changed to me, and there he dropped his handkerchief and my poor life. Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, God!

EDWIN. She is o'er wrought. Quick! She falls.

JUDGE. Call a physician.

EDWIN. See! Her spirit hath repented of its flight and now resumes its earthly tenement. She breathes. She opes her eyes. 'Tis I. 'Tis Edwin, Magdalen!

MAGDALEN. Nay, let me rise. I know you well. You are that ghost which dogs my heels and cries into my ear, False! False! False!

EDWIN. My God! Her looks! I'm Edwin. Look. I am your very Edwin!

MAGDALEN. My very Edwin! No—I know you, Edwin, and I am not mad. You are not my Edwin, for I am the bride of worms. I killed my husband.

You do know that true—and so I killed your love—
and so I die.

PHYSICIAN. She is not mad. She knows her words.

JUDGE. Then must she tread the gallows' step.

Alas, the pigmy clumsiness of man—take her from
hence. O, what a fragile ball we juggle with!

END OF THE SECOND PART

THE THIRD PART
OF THE
MASQUE OF LOVE

A MASQUE OF LOVE: THE THIRD PART.

SCENE I. A WREN SINGING ON A COTTAGE ROOF-PEAK.

SONG OF THE WREN.



WAKE! Awake! Awake! Let all things awake and praise the coming of the sun. Behold the East is flushing—the silent night has gone and the jubilant day cometh. Sing! Sing! Sing! Let every living thing sing the gladness of its life unto the god of light. See! See! See! His arrows shoot into the silvern sky. He is coming. All things hush! He bursts upon the world. The sky is blue again. The sun has come. O, warm and beautiful god! How beautiful is the world! How glorious is the morning! The sun worketh the springtime. Spring is tip-toeing upon the hills. He will awaken the earth with kisses. Sing out my heart until my throat doth almost burst. I am full of love. I sing to thee, and for thee, my little brown mate. Oh, how sweet thou art—how soft and warm and delicate. A hunger for thee consumes me, my lovely one. How prettily you fly. How daintily you swing upon the rose twig. How quick is the turn of your neck. How bright are your eyes. Oh, I must pursue you, my little, brown, beautiful one. There is something which calls me to thee—which binds me to thee. Let me sing or I shall die. Sing! Sing! Sing! the love madness, the life gladness which is within me. I sing to the beautiful blue sky—to the smiling brown earth, now blushing green—opening and budding everywhere—starred all over with the

crocuses and jonquils, dandelions and violets and snowdrops. The peeping buds of willow and of birch prick their stems. The alder—the maple—the chestnut—and all trees are awakening. See! See! See! my tiny, brown feather-ball, here it is. Here is the dark secure little chamber where I came to life. Here we shall have young ones. Here, amid the roses, in this little hole close up under the roof. Here you shall sit upon the dear speckled eggs which we shall love so much. Quick! Quick! Grass and straw and hair caught for us by the bushes from the kindly cows and horses of the pasture. Kind bushes! And down for the lining, soft as thy breast. My little one, my warm, little feather-ball. Quick! Quick! I cannot wait. O, god of day! O, beautiful sky and budding things, I have poured out my heart to ye! I have told ye my love. The sun is now looking at me. He tells us to work and build our home. Quick! Quick! My sweet, little brown mate. Let us build our home and make ready for the little ones. Oh, how anxiously we shall feed them. Come! Come! Come!

[Enter Mary and Alfred]

ALFRED. Hail morning! Ruddy and sweet and born anew.

MARY. The wrens have returned. How wonderful! At the appointed hour, from the far Southland, through haunting perils, they appear and begin the making of a home. How tender is the God who hath preserved them.

ALFRED. There is no such God! Nay! In the long flight many have fallen. How cruel is the God who hath permitted their death! Nay! There is none

such, cruel or pitiful, but only one great law, neither cruel nor merciful, but only just.

MARY. No God!

ALFRED. Gods are the creatures of man, changing as man changes. The God of Asia is not the God of Europe. The God of Moses not the God of today. The divine commands of one age are the horrors of another age. Nay, Sweetheart, let us not rest upon a God, but upon ourselves, with hope in the working of the universal law and resignation to the universal end. We are but visions of a moment. How endless is the life procession! Millions have been and shall be. Creation was not for us, ourselves. Nay, not for man—chief insect on this pettiest ball. Let us meet the waves of time with what they bring, saying of all, "This hath been and shall be." Saying unto evil, as of good, "This too must end." Leaning not upon God, but on that within us which hath made all gods.

MARY. But it is comforting to rest our burdens upon another. To draw courage from a guardian all-powerful.

ALFRED. And what does he help? Does he thwart the laws of flood, or fire, or dread disease because of goodness or of prayers? The universal mystery we shall never know. Put by this larger man. This God; he hath been made by man.

MARY. Thou art my God.

ALFRED. Nay, not that! Put me so high and I shall fall. I am thy friend. O, Sweetheart, God and Heaven and Hell are in ourselves. In thee I find my Heaven—my inspiration and my peace.

MARY. My well beloved. Let me kiss thine eyes.

ALFRED. Let us be in the world and of the world

and yet above the world. The competition to out-grasp. The cheat of politics, where shallowest tricksters win the day and hollowest skulls ring loudest. The triumph of shrewd robbery. The seers and prophets scorned. The upward progress of mankind so slow you cannot note it move. This breathless racing is the law of life, if only it were free. And all the good of Hope and Charity and Poetry and Love—that, too, is from man. There is no foundation for aught good or ill but man himself. See! The wrens are building.

MARY. Cunning architects. Above philosophy and satisfied in love.

ALFRED. And I. As so I would were all the world. All free. Each satisfied to live the life of utter truth and die uncaring.

MARY. All satisfied with only love.

ALFRED. Our love is blending of the mastering, mating passion and of friendship of true souls. The fires of love kept glowing by the wholesome airs of dear companionship. There is a love which binds these pretty wrens. A hot desire. Great Nature's spur—mere mating. It is passing. It breeds and there's the end. Great Nature's turn is served. The race will live. But there's a love of minds. A melting of twin souls. An endless, high companionship. 'Tis folly to bind fast this only breeding love. As well decree eternal mating of these wrens. But when 'tis intermingled with this ever-growing marriage of the soul, there is a union needs no law to bless.

MARY. Oh, who would keep a love that has grown cold, as if it were a chattel thing to be held by law? Of all the follies, laws are worst. Most useless where

there is not love, most needless where it is. Come, see my hens, which sit so solemnly upon their nests. What stirs in them affection for those smooth, round eggs and keeps them patient to their charge? What is it makes their anxious motherhood to guard and feed their chicks and teaches them to know their own?

ALFRED. I'll tell thee by another question. What makes the salmon leave its salty home and press unto the farthest mountain brook, there in the clear and pebbly pools to lay her eggs? What makes the silver-sided, lusty he to follow close and milk his seed upon those eggs? And there, past hope to breathe the sea again, to die? What makes the queen bee soar but once into the skyey depths? What makes the glistening drones pursue her and the eagerest of them all find in the instant of his joy that love is death? Aye, who shall answer what means this dumb, mad race that life shall live, indifferent who may die?

MARY. Why should we answer, dear? Is it not enough that you and I have found each other out of all the world? That we do live, and that the world is beautiful? And when we die, we shall together sleep, and still the world shall be above us beautiful. And others, too, shall love and set their feet upon our paths and laugh where we have laughed.

ALFRED.

'Tis good to feel, tho' I must soon be merged
In quiet Earth, yet shall the blabbing rill
From Spring's quick showers go tumbling down
the hill

All sodden with warm rain. From sadness purged,

The lover's heart shall sing, his blood be urged
By Springtime's throbbing ecstasy; and still
Shall ear rejoice to catch the call and trill
Of mating larks or cuckoos' mocking dirge.
Let shine the willows, silver tipped i' the sun,
Earth's whisper catching first of all the trees.
Let waken all the hives of crawling bees,
And crystal drops shine every twig upon.
Yea, I am glad still shall the waters run,
The love notes swell, tho' I know none of these.

[Enter Harold, a Fool.]

MARY. Good morning, Harold.

HAROLD. Harold likes the sun. It is warm. The
devils all sleep when the flowers are blooming.
Good sun. Good sun.

ALFRED. How is Harold this day?

HAROLD. Harold is glad. He will not chop any
more wood. His fingers will not freeze when he
milks the cows. Summer is coming. I have a lamb.
It is a foolish thing.

MARY. But you must love it.

HAROLD. What is love? Let me see your hand.
Pretty. Pretty. How they sparkle in the sun — red
and white and green. Are they little flowers?

MARY. No, they are stones.

HAROLD. Flowers are prettier. Tulips are red,
and the crocus and hyacinths white and purple.
Violets are blue.

MARY. But they will die.

HAROLD. What is to die? See your peach trees.
They are all tricked out in pink. That is pretty.

ALFRED. And by and by you shall have peaches.

HAROLD. I like peaches. Do you know what the

peaches do? Listen. They chase away the fine, pink, dainty lady-blossoms, and stand big and sweet where the blossoms were. Why is that? I like peaches. The sun makes them. I have watched the sun whispering to the little green balls till they swelled up big and red. So proud. I'll bring my lamb. He is a little fool. Sucking milk and playing in the sun all day. A foolish little fool. [Exit Harold.]

MARY. Poor young man!

ALFRED. Indeed, poor boy! Alas! that man, the topmost animal, should ever see the only jewel in his crown so dimmed. And yet it is a cushion to the buffets of the world; a wall which fences out self-consciousness and questioning—remorse—regret—and sorrow for lost joy. It puts away that rack on which the mind will stretch itself of why and wherefore. How have we come? Whence shall we go? It gives that mute content these placid cows bear in their eyes. The greatest jewel is a peaceful soul.

MARY. For that great jewel would you surrender up the restless, probing mind and wondrous memory?

ALFRED. Nay. Mind is power and sense of being. We would not yield it, though we walk in Hell. But I do envy careless birds; and bees, with their one, all-absorbing purpose. Kine and sheep, and all these lower brethren who take the gift of life and are content. Peace, Peace! Just Peace! That is my cry. I am not young. I am not old. But I am young enough to know how soft thy lips. How deeper than the skies thine eyes. And old enough to know there is no prize in all ambition's press which equals living peace. Ere yet we take that dumb and lasting peace upon her breast.

MARY. Art thou at peace?

ALFRED. At perfect peace—born of thy love. We'll have as much or little of the world as we do choose. Come, let us prune our orchards, walk among our honey colonies which have awaked at coming summer's touch and gild themselves upon the willows and the alders' pollen. Speak with the sparrows in the hawthorne hedge and watch the kindly motherhood of hens and ewes and cows. Receive the adulation of our honest hounds.

MARY. And I, O thank the great eternal mystery, am quick within me and shall be mother too.

ALFRED. My love! My love!

SONG OF THE WREN.

Let us pause a moment in our building while I sit above our secret home and sing the love which is in me. I cannot help but sing. Love! Love! Love! My pretty brown mate, with the gentle eyes, I love thee. I love thee. See! See! See! Our home is building. Our pretty home—so dark—so secret. There thou wilt lay and nurse the little white eggs we love so much. There, amid the roses, where the sweet-smelling rose-buds will hang even in our door, and I will sit here above thee and sing to thee, Oh so madly, a psalm of love!

SCENE II. A BED CHAMBER.



ALFRED. Ah, God! Thy suffering!

MARY. All and more for thy dear sake. Even through the gates of death.

ALFRED. Let me wipe thy brow.

MARY. Nay. Let me hold thy hands and wring them in my agony. Oh!

[The cry of a new-born babe is heard.]

ALFRED. There is thy reward, dear heart. Once more the world hears the wail of a new-born life. The eternal cry out of the unknown into the unknown. A man is born.

MARY. To my ears it is as if it were the very first on earth. Oh, give him me! My baby boy! Lay thy velvet cheek on mine, my sweet. Wilt love thy mother? I have suffered for thee.

ALFRED. 'Tis just begun. And be he faultless, yet he'll never know and never will repay to thee thy years of brooding care, save to another, as thou doest now repay thy mother's debt. But we shall joy in him. O, how I love thee! How this little, living bond doth tie me to thee! Let me comfort thee with kisses. My heart goes out to thee and I am proud. Our boy! My boy! I made him! I! I gave him life! His eyes are violet blue like thine.

MARY. O, no! I want him all my copy of thee. See! O! Who hath taught him to seek his mother's breasts and suck? Ah! It is sweet. I thank thee, love.

ALFRED. This is our flower.

MARY. Our bud. Our precious bud.

ALFRED. Now sleep, thou sweet mother. Thou hast wrought a mystery.

MARY. Stay by me, so whene'er I lift mine eyes I'll see thee.

ALFRED. Rest!

SCENE III. A MEADOW. A BROOK, FRINGED
WITH WILLOWS.

Edgar, first-born son of Mary and Alfred. Harold.



EDGAR. You always catch the most, Harold.
HAROLD. Harold knows the fish. He coaxes them. He wishes them upon the hook and they come. They are pretty — red freckles and black. So slim and so quick. How they jump upon the line. But Harold holds them, and presently they wink at him with their gills once, twice, and are still.

EDGAR. Why do they die so soon out of water?

HAROLD. Harold doesn't know. I saw a man once taken from the mill pond. He was white and still. He splashed and jumped like the trout for a minute, and when he was taken from the water they put him in a hole. I was glad. He used to beat me.

EDGAR. No one beats you now.

HAROLD. No! Harold is too strong.

EDGAR. You said you would show me how to trap rabbits.

HAROLD. Hush! They are devils! They hear everything. Their ears are wagging this way, that way. They'll hear us now and tell their master. Come close. Wait till the oak leaves fall. I'll show you then.

EDGAR. My mother says there are no devils — except men.

HAROLD. Hush! Have you never seen faces looking from the trunks of old oaks and beeches? Has your mother seen the rabbit listening at night under the window and talking to the moon? Come closer. I saw the devil once. He was all black. He changed

into a crow and flew up to the moon, laughing and screaming. I've had women wave to me, and when I came they changed to bushes, or I heard them stealing off, and voices everywhere—by the brook and in the forest, saying to me, "Come! Come! Come! All will be beautiful." But I can never find them. They are like the air. Is that not devils?

EDGAR. It is growing dark. Let us go home.

HAROLD. Ah! Ha! The dark. Then is their time. They see like cats. I've seen their shining eyes. Cats are devils too.

EDGAR. Give me your hand, Harold. Let us go home.

[Enter Alfred and Mary.]

MARY. You wicked children. We are looking for you.

HAROLD. Harold is not wicked.

MARY. No, no, good Harold. You are very good. And now you shall come home and have hot bread and cream and honey.

HAROLD. Hot bread and cream and honey. Oh, that is good. See what a lot of fish.

MARY. Poor prettylings. Your darting motion gone. Your bright eyes glazed. All still.

ALFRED. And so in time must we—and all.

HAROLD. Not Harold. I never shall be still. They'll never put me in a hole. I'm big and strong now. Stronger than all. I will not let them.

MARY. O blessed Hope and Faith! Ye jewels of the simple mind. Go home, Harold and Edgar. We shall follow.

ALFRED. Is not truth always good?

MARY. Yes, truth is the one eternal goal. Nothing can be better. Nothing must obscure it.

ALFRED. If Hope and Faith be not true, but airy visions born of dread, then put them by and learn a newer strength born of the equal justice of eternal laws.

MARY. But what if Hope and Faith be true?

ALFRED. If true, they'll be all true. Truth is a perfect crystal without flaw. Hark to that cat-bird minstrelsing from out the hedge his joy to live. That is the truth.

MARY. The stars are stealing into place. They are the truth.

ALFRED. And to the stars what is man or bird? Oh, warbler from the dusk, once more from your dark privacy you shout your psalm and prayer! As so shall mine be; glad of my days and nights, content to win my living from earth's lips, content to close my eyes unfretful of the mystery which heeds me not. I too have fished, and in the whispering days of June, beside the sweet, discoursing brook, I've watched the shadows of the May-flies dance. Than those frail ghosts, we, in the make-up of the worlds, are less. Than that brief moment life and love are briefer.

MARY. Say not love is brief. How have we loved in growing loveliness these slow-paced years. It hath been long, and Fate, I thank thee, that it hath been so. And I do love to dream that love shall not end, but we, though but as shadows once again, shall meet and kiss.

ALFRED. Sweet dream. Sweet dreamer. Man dies: his dreams do live. The strongest bones must rot; the burliest oak must fall. There is no edifice today but trees shall grow in its halls. The rock-ribbed

mountains of the earth are slowly melting to the sea. But those fictions which men rapturously have coined from air, they are immortal. Flesh shall die, but thought shall live.

MARY. You mean that we shall die, but dreams of happy love and the story of our loving dream shall live?

ALFRED. Aye! Year after year, as to the same small den beneath our roof the wrens return. As wake the bees as soon as spring whispers at the hive. As with an upward passion, tender buds do shoot and ferns uncurl. As our brown fields turn sheets of green, or hens do cluck, or ewes do bleat, or thunder-throated bulls do paw the earth. As sure as love makes over all the world each singing year by year, so shall our dream of love be heard by listening, lover hearts.

MARY. I dread to die. I want to live with you a dreamful, deathless life in some fair valley as the poets feigned.

ALFRED. Another dream! The order of the world is end, and death is best. But who would look upon a skull who might gaze into thy moist and speaking eyes? I too crave that valley of the heart's desire, where all is peace and endless love. But flowers must fade that fresher ones may bloom. And we must live in our children—they in theirs. That is our immortality.

MARY. Our children! They seem to sit within my heart as if when they were born they left their image there. How sweet, though suffering; cruel sweet the night that Edgar was born. Dost thou love me now as then?

ALFRED. More! Love too must fade, or grow and put forth limbs. Thou hast been to my feeding love a pasture growing every fragrant herb. Unto my listening soul an organ, playing all notes, all tunes. The high ecstatic peal — the low and sobbing dirge. The storm of passion and the psalm of peace. Thou hast been many women unto me. I am as other men, and have naturally a manifold and changeful love, but thou hast kept me single unto thee because in thee I found at Life's feast an every taste I craved. I love thee most tonight.

MARY. The stars are listening.

ALFRED. And there a night-jar croaks.

MARY. There is no ill omen to my happy heart.

ALFRED. Tomorrow we will note our coming harvest, and when the day's heat is past you shall sing to me underneath the old fig tree.

MARY. Or we will give a picnic in the oak grove near the spring.

ALFRED. The dogs are barking.

MARY. It is a welcome from the outer dark unto the shelter of our home.

SCENE IV. MORNING. A GARDEN AND ORCHARD, WALLED IN BY WILD-ROSE HEDGE AND ROWS OF POPLARS.



ATILDA. Edgar! Edgar!

EDGAR. What is it?

MATILDA. Where are you? [Enter Harold]

HAROLD. There is Edgar in yon fig tree.

MATILDA. Edgar, what are you doing?

EDGAR. Gathering figs for father's breakfast. They

are now cool from the night. And these at the top he likes best.

MATILDA. I have roses here for mother. We are going to have a picnic today in the oak grove.

HAROLD. Good! Harold will have cake and cream.

EDGAR. Sister, take these figs into the house. Tell father it was I who picked them. [Exit Matilda] Harold, Wolf and Beauty killed a buck this morning. I heard them half the night. You must not let them out.

HAROLD. The moon was very bright. They asked me to. I passed their kennel and they begged me. Come to the pond. I set a net last night.

EDGAR. No. I must go bring in the buck. He lies in the canyon field, in the alfalfa near the water wheel. You must not loose the dogs again.

[Exeunt Edgar and Harold. Enter Alfred and Mary]

ALFRED. Sweetheart, see those distant peaks which wall our valley in. Blue with the fir forest at their top and green in rolling softness lower down. There next the sky lies Peace—amid the quiet of the mountain-top: and here, too, I find peace. Here in my home. If Care be alive, he is hid beyond our poplar rampart and our outer wild-rose hedge.

MARY. This is our kingdom.

ALFRED. What is this fever which leads men to jail themselves between four walls? To fret the city with their restless feet? What can riches buy more than enough? Happiness is from the mind. It is not purchaseable. Can riches buy a sweeter morn—dew in the air and freshness on our brow? Can riches buy that oriole's song, or quail's clear note, or give us more than plenteously our flocks and

fields' ungrudging yield? Power! Vain bubble! What citizens are half so loyal as these noisy dogs? I abhor power. It never hath been used, but it hath been abused. Power and abuse of power are one—inseparable! Nay, give it to a god, and it will make him half a devil. I have what power I crave. The power of love. Our children and our servitors, my friends. Still does a part govern the mass. Still comes misery because the good will enforce their goodness, nor leave to each his judgment free. I would not change this orchard's peace, the music of the birds and brooks; the sense of kindliness in Mother Earth, for any tyranny of power.

MARY. Power could not make thee bad.

ALFRED. Assuredly it would. If not in heart, yet tyrannous in act, believing that the act was best. Yet naught that's good is half so good as that each for himself may choose.

MARY. Here are my colonies, where love is power and willing working is the order. Gentle bees!

ALFRED. Their village of white houses underneath the apple trees hums with its ordered industry. How lulling is the sound.

MARY. And who would say to see one tiny voyager creeping to her cells that such as she from dainty cups of apple blossoms, peach and pear, from figs and grapes and purple alfalfa fields, could store me twenty tons of nectar ere the winter seals them down. Our pigeons flock upon the barns.

ALFRED. And far unto the dusty road our apple trees, in row on row, bow heavy with their freight. We hear the clack of wagons and the laughter of the pickers.

SONG OF THE APPLE PICKER.

Happy our lot under blue skies,
Under the apple boughs, picking the apples.
Golden and red; perfumed and sweet;
Fruit of the sun; fruit of the earth.
Gift of our Mother Earth, kindly and fruitful.
Cool leaves about us, branches enfold us.
Like robins, those pilferers, we
hide in the branches.
Happy our lot under blue skies;
Gay is our toil with laughter and mirth.
Light are our hearts with jokes and with singing,
Soft rustle the branches we pluck of their gold.
Soft are the lips of the maidens we love,
Soft is the moon when our labors are over.
Pleasant the days with bustle and song.
Pleasant the quiet of rose-colored eve.
Pleasant the night with cool, fragrant slumber.
Pleasant the night with music and dancing.
The moon who hath lighted us goes to her bed.
The dawn paints the East.
The stars all grow pale.
The ghost wingèd owl flits o'er our pathway.
The scent of the apples, the clover, the leaves,
The scent of the grass, of mint and of earth,
Steals abroad on the dew and the
freshness of morning.
Soft are the lips of the maidens we love.

MARY. Let us sit in the shade of this willow, where
the water in the irrigation ditch murmurs to the
earth gently like a lover, saying, I will woo thee; I
will make thee fertile. Sweet is the breeze, bearing

smell of the alfalfa and of the dry strawberry beds, smell of the vines and the grapes, the peaches and the peach leaves.

ALFRED. The breeze is soothing. The hum of bees is soothing. Bees and wasps and flies and the gilded yellow-jackets hum in the air and swarm upon the juicy plums and peaches which lie scattered on the ground. The smell of the ripe apples is sweet as roses.

MARY. Soothing is the old water-wheel, cool and slippery and dripping, turning slowly in its labor daily and nightly; steadily, with kindly persistence to refresh the earth; steadily with gentle drip and murmur.

ALFRED. Ceaselessly, steadily as it pours into the trough and into the small furrows its bright blessing, so hast thou poured thy life-giving love into my channels and my desert places blossom and bear fruit.

MARY. As from the sun the apple leaves eagerly draw strength for fragrant blossoms and the golden fruit, so from thy companionship have I drunk strength. Thou art my lover dear, but most my friend.

ALFRED. Aye! that is best. Sweetheart, is not this a beauteous world? The earth so bountiful to give us bread and wine, luscious fruits and winter store of apples and of nuts; wealth for simple needs; books within ourselves and pictures in the skies. To our strong-limbed children, ruddy-cheeked, we'll leave an heritage of lustihood and peaceful minds. Teach them to live within themselves; to cease to wish to govern others. To know the world is beautiful.

MARY. Alas! Its only darker spots are made by men.

ALFRED. Teach them to hate the tax that's taken from another's sweat. To cease to bend men's acts or thoughts by tyranny of vain majorities. To leave the Earth's bare and vacant bosom free to those who first shall hug and suck her. Not by a foolish, kingly right to fence her children out; neither using nor suffering to be used. To soar toward Freedom. O! bright, irresistible God—not Liberty, but Freedom! I see the day when men shall touch thy garment's hem. Not one shall be his brother's keeper. All shall be free—man and woman—mind and body. Each by his strength to rise, or weakness, fall. Then shall men look upon this present as gods who gaze into a dark valley from the peaks of light. There in the darkness far below creatures grope about and wailings rise.

MARY. And we will teach our children how precious is an amethyst day like this. How priceless is a sparrow's song. How worthless is the struggle and the fret which ends but in a grave. That poesy is all the gold there is.

ALFRED. And happiness is but to know the beauty of the world.

MARY. To live aright the sole ambition.

ALFRED. And righteousness is but to live the truth. Be free and let be free. Helping, not ruling! Giving, not taking! To garner thought, not gold. To die content, and have some eyes grow wet. A memory of us kept that's sweet as lavender and giving to the living strength like wine. Peace in life. Content in death. And Justice ever. This is the sum.

[Enter Father Dominic]

FATHER DOMINIC. Pax vobiscum.

ALFRED. Et tecum pax.

MARY. Good Father Dominic, how kind! You bring your violin. We shall have revelry of music and of song.

FATHER DOMINIC. Yes. I have leave to stay two days.

ALFRED. Thou naughty school-boy! Leave to stay! And there thy monastery shines upon the hill a rifle-shot away.

FATHER DOMINIC. It is necessary discipline, my children. Life is discipline.

MARY. True! True! Life's ripened fruit is a chastened soul.

ALFRED. The discipline which lends a fibre to the soul is self-combat.

FATHER DOMINIC. Our poor monastic laws, at which you smile, are but the simple rules which sailors bear for the good of all. But it is truly as you say, enforced restraint is worthless as a withered leaf. True discipline is the struggle up to God.

ALFRED. What is God, Father?

FATHER DOMINIC. God is a name. Man's deep yearning toward the all-inscrutable. Unto the simple it is a father—tender, wise, hearing his children's cries. To me and ye God is the vast, unsounded mystery; but still all-wise, all-merciful.

ALFRED. God is man seeing himself in a mirror and knowing not his image. I marvel that you, a churchman, dare to look beyond the Hebrew God.

MARY. Nay, marvel not at that; but marvel if our Father Dominic were aught but wise and good.

FATHER DOMINIC. The mission of the Church is help. The God she offers is as each hath sight to see:

Allah, Jehovah, or the Universal Law, but always the all-wise; the compassionate, the all-merciful.

ALFRED. Aye, this blind and heartless Universal Law is yet all-wise, all-merciful, compassionate.

MARY. And Christ? Was he the Son of God?

FATHER DOMINIC. And was he not? That gentle one? And are we not all sons of God?

ALFRED. A Gautama, Mohammed, Socrates?

FATHER DOMINIC. All who have taught to render good for ill, to give back love for hate—to leave men free, are sons of God.

MARY. The sovereignest sons of man are sons of God. Such creed none could refuse.

FATHER DOMINIC. The Church refuseth none. She is very patient.

ALFRED. Patience is life's lesson too, good friend! You learn it as the prisoner doth. You cannot choose.

FATHER DOMINIC. No. If I be prisoner 'tis by my will. We learn to serve, and serving learn he is not greatest who seems to rule. We learn the servant and the master are but friends. That from all service must be taken the haughty stain which pride hath blacked it with. We learn that labor is the mother of all good, and all labor is good. In labor there are no degrees as in the ribbons of a puppet-made nobility. We learn all men are brethren, all virtue justice, all religion kindness.

MARY. Dear friend, thou art a godly, that's a goodly, man. I know the calm thy harbor gives thee in the tumult of this worldly sea. I know the patient service of a chastened heart.

ALFRED. Dear friend. You find peace there—I here. Here in the world. Its turmoil changed to

hum of bees and chatter of the saucy jays. Here 'mid the blooms of spring and gold of autumn, bartering my orchard's gold into the harder stuff from stony-hearted cities. Here 'mid the laughter of young men and women gathering earth's fruits. Here with her who is my chosen friend and mother of new generations; young wrestlers we are, coaching for the strifeful sands. Teaching them that soft and slender, youthful arms must hardened be for blows, but blows for justice and for freedom, the One and Indivisible. To live as we will and let men live as they will. To claim no more than we can use. To sleep the sleep which crystal skies pour on the just. Thou there; I here. I in my narrow cell, half free, thou in thy narrower, less free. Thou there amid the golden dusk; I here, my hand within the hands of love, soothed by thy vesper bells, at peace. Somewhat I envy thee thy utter peace of soul.

FATHER DOMINIC. Ah, God!

MARY. Laughter rises from the packing house. Is it not a cage of sparrows, finches, parrakeets. Hear that burst of laughter borne to us on the breeze. Come, let us go.

FATHER DOMINIC. Ah, youth! Thou time of love and laughter!

ALFRED. Tut! Tut! Thou holy man. What hast thou to do with love?

FATHER DOMINIC. What insect hath not to do with love—O, passion wonderful!

MARY. All love is holy.

FATHER DOMINIC. Aye, all. There is no such thing as unholy love.


MARY. Come!

ALFRED. A pitcher of wine first, in the arbor. The clusters above us and the juice before us.

MARY. Yes, and you are in time for a picnic. Would you condescend from symphonies and sonatas to play dances for the youth?

FATHER DOMINIC. Is it condescension to give happiness? Happiness is life's nectar. Blessed is he who lifts the cup to another's lips even for a moment. Kindness is more precious than jewels. Ah, youth; blessed time of love and laughter.

SCENE V. THE PACKING HOUSE.

RIS. Kate is in love; no more she sings; no more we hear her laughter.

KATE. Iris is in love. Ever she laughs and she chatters.

ROSE. Kate, of the straight black brows, hath John forsook thee?

NELL. Patience, Kate; soon he'll come back from the city.

KATE. Patience, Nell, maybe he will bring thee a ribbon.

IRIS. I'll have a duke, at least, for my true sweetheart. Here in this box I've packed this big red apple. On its wrapper I have written, "This is the heart of Iris." He will discover this far off in London.

KATE. I now can see the duke down in the cellar — unpacking apples, far off in London. Here, Iris, put this in. Say, "This box was packed by slim-throated Iris."

NELL. Star-gazing Iris.

ROSE. White-handed Iris. With pink finger-tips as if picking strawberries.

KATE. Sunny-haired Iris.

IRIS. Flint-hearted Iris. (Laughter.) I will load this box with precious freight. Here I will pack May, with the trees a-bloom, bees in the blossoms.

KATE. And I give thee April with soft, weeping skies.

IRIS. Thou art melancholy.

KATE. Nay. Rain is happiness and life. It makes the pink buds start, the young fruit swell.

NELL. I give thee hot summer, with the creak of the irrigating wheel and murmur of water—murmur of the leaves of the orchard.

IRIS. And I this autumn season with chastened heat and smell of dying leaves and fragrance of apples.

KATE. All this, for a duke in smoky, stony London.

WILL. Iris, pack in a kiss; 'twill sweeter be and redder than the apples.

IRIS. There! A kiss. It is done.

WILL. Fast fly your nimble hands; fast as soft shuttles and the continuous rustle of the paper wrappers is like leaves in a south wind; but faster still fly your tongues, ruddy-cheeked chatterers.

KATE. Thou art our master here. Thou art our foreman. But at the set of sun, down in the almond grove, Rose and a man I know. Who there is master? (Laughter.)

WILL. Kate, of the flashing smile, you grow too saucy. Sing to us, Kate. Put off melancholy.

SONG.

John's eyes are dark, his teeth are white,
All curly is his chestnut hair.
He sings the songs of Love's delight,
And after him the maidens stare.

Laughing he speaks,
With glowing cheeks,
Kitty, will you marry me?
Kitty, Kitty, O so pretty,
Will you marry me?

Dick's sire is old, with store of gold
The grumbling water turns his mill,
And be it bought or be it sold,
Shrewd Richard is the gainer still.

Boldly he said,
It is a trade,
Kitty, will you marry me?
In the city we'll live, Kitty,
If you'll marry me.

Will's heart is true his arm is stout,
His eyes are grave and wise;
The roses twine his porch about,
His orchard smiling lies.

Under his breath,
Softly he saith,
Kitty, will you marry me?
Kitty, Kitty! Oh, have pity!
Will you marry me?

ALL. Good! Good! Kate's voice is coming back

as the meadow-larks do in the autumn.

IRIS. What did Kitty say?

KATE (Sings).

To quiet marsh the blackbird flies,
On bare rocks coos the dove;
O I will dwell where my love lies!
I'll mate with my true love.

IRIS. Which did she take?

NELL. Yes, which?

KATE. Choose for yourselves. She took the true heart and snug home, either without other is folly and a thorny bed.

ROSE. Here comes Kate's steadfast beau, half-witted Harold. [Enter Harold]

HAROLD. Harold has a bird for Kate.

WILL. A cock quail.

KATE. Oh, the pretty! His little head crested. See how bright his eyes, restless and frightened. Let him go, Harold.

HAROLD. Harold trapped him for Kate.

KATE. Then give him me. I will not keep him. Ah! How his heart beats! There, take thy freedom. Fly to the mountain-side, to the thick covert. Fly to thy waiting mate and brood so timid. Once more together. Run down the dusty road, plunge in the wild rose; whirr o'er the gentle brook and o'er the orchard. I'll hear thy whistle, shrill, hailing the morning. Go to thy freedom!

HAROLD. Harold caught him for thee.

KATE. Good Harold. Good Harold. Here is some candy.

HAROLD. You must all come to a picnic now in the oak grove.

WILL. Tut! Tut! First finish your boxes. Now fast your hands do fly—faster than humming birds.

IRIS. There sounds the horn, calling to pleasure.

NELL. Music and dancing.

ROSE. Under the oak trees.

KATE. Soft breezes whispering.

IRIS. Stars peeping downward.


WILL. Away! Away! [Enter Father Dominic]

ALL. Oh, Father Dominic. Good Father Dominic.

Come to our dancing. Play us some music.

FATHER DOMINIC. Gladly and merrily. Ah, youth! Thou blessed time of love and laughter.

SCENE VI. A HILLSIDE ARBOR: IN IT STONE SEATS AND A SQUARE STONE TABLE.

ARY. Here lies Father Dominic's violin; mute, mute. Where is the hand which gave it soul?

ALFRED. And there beneath the almond trees, inside the monastery walls, lies Father Dominic—mute, mute. But another shall wake the violin to newer life; and again the almond trees shall bloom and ever upon earth shall come Father Dominic—souls of gentleness, of goodness and of strength, teaching kindness and pity. The religion of living and letting live. [Enter Edgar and Matilda]

MARY. My children. We will perform rites in memory of our friend. Edgar, there is the violin he taught thee to draw sobs from.

ALFRED. And laughter.

MARY. Matilda, he found the music of thy voice.
Here we will remember him.

ALFRED. Let our bodies be burned and the ashes
scattered to the winds. Memory is the only monu-
ment. Give me not fame or sculptured tomb. Let
me be buried in the hearts I've loved. Let each but
say of me, "He was kind. He gave me strength. He
dropped upon my heart some dew of happiness.
His faults were faults of gentleness and pity, but he
was iron for the right." Let such words be my
epitaph. I want no funeral urns save loving hearts.
I only ask that some shall say, "I loved him."

[Matilda chanting. Edgar playing on the violin and
occasionally joining the chant.]

Sing, sing, ye little birds, which come in Spring,
When buds are opening and airs blow warm.
Sing, sing, ye little birds, which in leafy June
Do feed your young amid the sheltering leaves.
Sing, wrens, with tiny bills and ruffled throats,
Sing, robins, twitter, swallows, from your dens.
Sing, finches, in the cedar trees and thickets green,
Whistle, ye blackbirds, from the fir tree's
swaying top.
Loud and clear pipe joy, ye speckled larks.
He is at rest.

Warble your liquid strain in the cold deeps
of the forest,
O, ye thrushes,
Thrushes with spotted breasts and timid eyes.
Ye speckled sparrows, all ye feathered choir,
Warble your clear and bubbling song.

Shy water ousels which plunge with ecstasy into
the foamy brook,
And haunt the silent shady shallows,
And nest behind the old mill's dripping veil.
Whistle, ye quail, in the golden wheat-fields,
And from the hedge-rows, chirp, ye sparrows.
Coo, ye doves, upon the rocky hillside,
Mourn, ye ghostly owls, unto the moon.
He is at rest.

Yet mourn not, for he mourned not;
Be ye glad of living, as he was glad,
And mourn not for the dead for that they are dead.
He is at rest, but life and love live on.
Come, ye lovers, at evening where he sleeps.
Be not sorrowful. Be glad. Let the boughs of the
Almond tree shelter ye.
Let the leaves kiss your cheeks.
Here, as you sit silent with love, he sits with you.
Hark to the twitter and gentle fluting of the
song sparrows;
Hark to the evening prayer of the earth and
the trees and the sky.
He is at rest.

Be ye glad, all ye living things. Glad for life
and glad for death.
Glad of the wintry storms, which wrestle with the
great oaks, so they toss in agony;
Glad of the rains which give drink to earth;
Glad of the wild roar of the thunder and the
down-pouring flood,
The swaying and tossing and lashing of the
trees in the tempest,

The breath of evening and the soft-footed breezes
of the summer night;
The cool and quiet forest aisles,
Mild and gentle rains which creep
down the hillside,
Whispering to the hidden things as they go.
Glad of the flowers which spread
their carpet on the hills,
And the grass which paints the valleys,
And the leaves which clothe the forests;
Glad of Frolic spring which dances over
the earth with flowery footsteps;
Glad of the orchards which burst into beauty
And deck the earth as a bride,
Which invite their lovers, the bees,
with lulling hum of gauzy wings;
Glad of the springtime air which drifts
in seas of fragrance.
Quarrel, ye noisy, swollen brooks;
Warble, ye summer rivers, over your pebbles;
Murmur, ye tranquil irrigation streams.
He is at rest.

Hang heavy, ye plum trees, purple and heavy;
Heavy, ye pear trees, drooping and golden;
Heavy, ye peach trees, velvet and fragrant,
Almond and fig trees and vines heavy with clusters,
Yellow-leaved vines, with clusters purple and ruby,
Goblets of wine for marrying and christening.
O, wise Mother Earth. Oh, fields, fat and fruitful;
Oh, kind Mother Earth. Oh, forest and rivers.
Oh, Beautiful Earth, silent and patient.
He is at rest.

Blow out, ye wintry storms, and swell your cheeks,
Strip all the earth to nakedness.
Peal, organ of the riven sky and of the cataract.
Wail, O melancholy harp among the
leafless fingers of the trees.
Die, ye butterflies, ye grasshoppers,
Your chirp is stilled. The earth is dead.
Sleep, ye wise and golden bees.
But yet again the buds shall swell,
The green shall leap upon the earth,
The air shall thrill with songs of birds,
The peach tree shall blush pink,
The wrens shall come again.
Again the blossoms sweet shall hum
with honey labor of the bees,
Forever he shall rest.

ALFRED. Oh, Life eternal.

MARY. Oh, Love eternal.

ALFRED. Blessed are we in life and love and
peace.

MARY. Blessed is Life.

ALFRED. Blessed is Death.

EDGAR and MATILDA (chanting). He is at rest.
He is at rest. Peace and forever. Let him rest.

ALFRED. Hark to the vesper bell.

MARY. The wren warbles his evening prayer.

SONG OF THE WREN.

I love thee. I love thee. O, little brown mate! I love
thee so that my heart swells into my throat. Year
after year I and my fathers have reared their brood
here under the roof peak. Here, where the roses

scramble and toss their heads. Here you and I have raised our little ones from the beautiful, little, delicate eggs, so dear. Here I have sung to thee in the dewy mornings and in the purple evenings. Here where the roses nodded to me. The roses are gone. Come, let us fly away to the Southland, to the land of the sun—ever fair. We and our children. Come! Come! Come! We all together. Come close to me, my little brown mate. I am singing to thee. I love thee. I love thee. In the springtime, when the flower-embroiderers are abroad and the breath of the night is full of spice—in the springtime we shall return to the nest of our love.

END OF THE THIRD PART

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